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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 DOHA 000581

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [KNNP](#) [EPET](#) [IR](#) [ASEC](#) [IZ](#) [SU](#) [LE](#) [QA](#)  
SUBJECT: QATARI-U.S. GULF SECURITY DIALOGUE MAY 24

Derived from: DSCG 05-1, B,D.

¶1. (C) Summary. State/DOD Gulf Security Dialogue delegation met with Qatari MFA, MOD, and MOI officials May 24 in Doha. The Qataris acknowledged the importance of maintaining ambiguity on whether there might be a military attack in response to Iranian plans to develop a nuclear weapon. Noting perceived weaknesses on Iraq's borders with Iran, the Qatari delegation advised tightening border security with additional Iraqi troops. The Qataris agreed to the visit of a Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection team June 6-11 and the establishment of a bilateral working group. They were noncommittal as to whether they would support a Chapter VII UNSC resolution to establish an international tribunal to investigate the assassination of former Lebanese PM Hariri. Qatari MOD was receptive to a proposed top-to-bottom defense review. The Qataris "may" attend the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism meeting in Kazakhstan, but only as observers. The GOQ is reviewing the CWC Challenge Inspections MOU at the ministerial level. The GOQ will "look into" the NPT safeguards agreement. They expressed willingness to help Lithuania with PRT funding in Afghanistan. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Acting Pol/Mil Assistant Secretary Stephen Mull and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Middle East) Mark T. Kimmitt co-led the U.S. delegation to the Gulf Security Dialogue in Doha May 24. Ambassador Chase Undermeyer, NEA DAS Gordon Gray, Maj Gen Vern Findley (CENTCOM, J5), COL Ron Tuggle (Joint Staff), Bruce Hardcastle (DIA), and Nikhil Ramchand (NSC) also participated. The Qatari delegation was led by MFA Assistant Minister Mohamed al-Rumaihi and included Brig Gen Abdulla Jumaan, Ahmed al-Mohannadi (Qatar State Security), and other MFA officials.

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Executive Session  
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¶3. (C) Rumaihi invited Ambassador Undermeyer and the leadership of the delegation for a small executive session prior to the start of the talks. In the session, he:

--requested a renewed inter-ministerial strategic dialogue following on a similar session in 2003;

--urged more robust U.S. participation in Qatari-hosted conferences highlighting NGO involvement in building democracy in the region;

--complained that U.S. messages and interactions often do not follow established protocol rules;

--expressed regret that the U.S. had not supported Qatar's bid to host the next Forum for the Future, and other regional sessions; and

--Briefly raised the cases of two Qatari detainees (brothers) and a Sudanese photographer for Al-Jazeera.

A/AS Mull and DAS Gray responded that it was unlikely we could hold an inter-ministerial dialogue regularly but could explore the possibility of doing one every three or four years.

14. (C) Mull and Gray also raised the issue of Qatar's recent declaration that it would not serve as the base for any military operation against Iran. While acknowledging that the U.S. has no intention of launching military action against Iran at this time, Mull noted the tactical value of maintaining ambiguity around the question as a disincentive to Iran's aggressive posture in the region. Rumaihi accepted the point and said he would aim to steer his government away from similar declarations in the future. They also pressed for Qatar's support for a UNSC Chapter VII resolution on establishing an international tribunal to investigate the Hariri assassination in Lebanon. Rumaihi said his government was concerned that enacting such a resolution would be destabilizing within Lebanon; Gray and Mull countered that it is important to remember that the Siniora government is the democratically-elected government of Lebanon and that it is important for the UN to respect its wishes in setting up the tribunal.

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Plenary  
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15. (C) Rumaihi opened the meeting calling for everyone to "be frank at this table." He reaffirmed "deep friendship" between

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the U.S. and Qatar, noting that the occasional friction in the bilateral relationship stems from its very closeness.

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Iran  
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16. (C) Hardcastle provided a detailed intelligence brief on Iran, including a threat assessment and an analysis of Iran's strategic vision. Rumaihi replied with three possible Iranian courses of action if cornered: First, Iran will try to stop oil and gas exports from the Gulf "in reaction to any measures," he said. "Iran has the upper hand in military, paramilitary, and terrorist actions against ships." Second, Iran will subject the region to political pressure for minority rights. "The region is sensitive to this," Rumaihi said, referring to local Shia populations. Third, Iran is trying to shape policy in the region, most visibly in Lebanon and Iraq. The Iranians seek regional power, recognition, and a role. Rumaihi said Iran's target was to affirm its influence by establishing a dialogue with the U.S. "Then they will have achieved their target."

17. (C) Rumaihi said that Qatar aims to use consultation (such as the GSD) and diplomacy to prevent Iran from achieving a heightened regional role. "If they have (exclusive) relations with the superpower, they will have a free hand in the Gulf region," he asserted. On the Iran nuclear issue, Rumaihi said the U.S. "may have to use dissuasion" (i.e., military action). But he advised consulting with "regional powers" Turkey, Pakistan, and India to help "stabilize" Iran and its nuclear program. A/AS Mull replied, "We've sensed that Iran wants to use talks (on May 28) to become a regional player."

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Israel/Palestinian Territories  
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18. (C) DAS Gray outlined three tracks the U.S. is pursuing toward peace: Israel/Palestinian bilateral talks, primarily

on day-to-day issues; the Arab/Israel track and the Arab Peace Initiative, which also complements the first track; and the Quartet effort, meant to garner international support. Though Israel PM Olmert and PA President Abbas are not strong domestically, which complicates the situation, President Bush has been clear on his vision for a two-state solution, which Secretary Rice is committed to implementing. Rumaihi said

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that his government viewed the Secretary's statements in December, when Qatar served as UN Security Council president, as "positive." He said that the Arab Peace Initiative was meant to address both peace and normalization simultaneously rather than meet Israeli requirements before those of the Palestinians. "We make it one issue," he said.

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Afghanistan, Lebanon, Yemen  
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¶9. (C) On Afghanistan, Gray said that any assistance Qatar could provide would be appreciated. A/AS Mull noted that the Lithuanians would soon approach the GOQ seeking financial and material support for a provincial reconstruction team. "We will do the necessary," Rumaihi replied. Gray thanked Qatar for its troop contributions to UNIFIL in southern Lebanon. He encouraged the Qataris to favorably consider any request from Yemen for military assistance. Rumaihi replied that Qatar had not yet been approached by the Yemenis on the matter.

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Sudan  
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¶10. (C) Gray noted that the U.S. expects Khartoum to allow the deployment of the Heavy Support Package as soon as possible, but Bashir "has a history of delay." He asked his Qatari hosts to press Khartoum to live up to its international obligations. In reply, Rumaihi brought up the issue of Sudan's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. Khartoum had approached the Qataris last fall to help facilitate rescission of the designation "but nothing has been done" by the U.S. "The U.S. should live up to its assurances" of improved bilateral relations with Khartoum, Rumaihi argued. The Sudanese government "looks forward" to better relations with Washington, and "there is a chance" for the U.S. to pull Khartoum away from harmful links with Damascus and Tehran. On Darfur, Rumaihi conceded that "Sudan needs lots of help" and its government is neither efficient nor responsive. He pointed to a forthcoming conference including the Sudanese government and international NGOs as a

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step in the right direction. A/AS Mull pointed out that the State Sponsored Terrorism list is not under the State Department's control and Sudan's removal from the list would require significant investigation.

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Somalia  
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¶11. (C) Rumaihi told the U.S. delegation that Qatar worked with the Council of Islamic Courts last fall (2006). "We were going to contact you (about the meetings), but then it heated up and Ethiopia got involved," he said. Qatar's goal is stability for Somalia and security for Qatar's energy exports shipped through waters off Somalia.

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Bilateral Relations  
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¶12. (C) Rumaihi claimed that some Qatari military officers had had problems obtaining U.S. visas for official travel and asked for continued efforts to resolve the issue.

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Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection  
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¶13. (C) Brig Gen Abdulla Jumaan outlined coordination with NAVCENT as a key component of Qatar's maritime security plan. He characterized the coordination as effective, though he called for implementation of a U.S./Qatari "contingency plan" dating from 2004. (Note. This plan is reactive and is not meant to provide deterrence.) Rumaihi conceded that, though the GOQ monitors ships and other vessels offshore, it needs to improve security plans. "Our side is interested in training," he said. MG Findley agreed to coordinate this request with CENTCOM and NAVCENT.

¶14. (C) Rumaihi welcomed the proposed visit of the Critical Energy Infrastructure protection team and the creation of a Joint Working Group. He suggested that the team meet with the MOI, as well as other stakeholders, during their visit.

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Enhanced Defensive Capabilities and Cooperation  
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¶15. (C) Rumaihi thanked the U.S. for installing Patriot missile batteries in Doha during the December 2006 Asian Games. BG Abdulla added that "there is cooperation here" on Patriots, and Qatar would look for a way to continue to discuss. A/AS Mull explained that U.S. policy was to ensure that partnering countries have all the security they need. The U.S. is prepared to do much more with Qatar, "but we need a COMSEC agreement first," he said. Maj Gen Findley and A/AS Mull outlined a top-to-bottom, strategic-to-tactical level review that the U.S. could offer to undertake with Qatar. The Qataris were receptive to the proposal.

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Iraq  
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¶16. (C) Rumaihi made two key points on Iraq: We have to do a better job of protecting Iraq's borders, and we need to strengthen Iraq's army. He said that the GOQ had "seen activity" on Iraq's borders with Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, and there is a need to "reinforce" these areas.

¶17. (C) Qatar has pledged USD 100 million for Iraq reconstruction and has disbursed half, Rumaihi said.

¶18. (C) Participating in the International Compact for Iraq will be "difficult," according to Rumaihi, because of PM al-Maliki, who, Rumaihi said, doesn't want "foreign assistance," only normal relations with other countries. Rumaihi criticized al-Maliki, saying he has failed to date to govern on behalf of all citizens. "We're not ready to help him without a clear picture. They have to tell us they're not sectarian; they need to treat all districts in a balanced way," Rumaihi said. In particular, he suggested that the PM meet Sunni tribal leaders more frequently. A/AS Mull answered that the way to help al-Maliki "govern for all" is to support him as much as possible. "Please show patience," he counseled. Maj Gen Findley concluded the topic with an update on the Baghdad Security Plan.

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Counter-Proliferation  
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¶19. (C) Rumaihi noted that Qatar has joined the Proliferation Security Initiative and that action was with the Qatari military. On the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, Rumaihi said that Qatar is waiting for a GCC position on civilian nuclear energy. Qatar might send an

observer to the June meeting in Kazakhstan, but there would be no decision on the initiative before that. A/AS Mull pointed out that there is no contradiction between civilian nuclear applications and the Global Initiative. On the Chemical Weapons Convention MOU on challenge inspections, Rumaihi said that the WMD Committee had sent the Council of Ministers a draft law. "We expect to be able to sign an MOU this year," he said. He said that Qatar would look into the issue of the Additional Protocol to the safeguards agreement. Finally, he noted that Qatar would be pleased to host next year's "Eagle Resolve" counter-proliferation exercise if no other country in the region were willing to host.

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Counterterrorism  
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¶20. (S) Qatar State Security representative Ahmed al-Mohannadi noted good cooperation on intelligence matters with U.S. entities. He cited visits, experts meetings, sharing of analyses, and coordination at the level of investigations. He also referred to a list of more than 200 persons who "might use Qatar's airport" that was shared with American authorities. Internally, the GOQ follows up on suspects named by other countries. "I assure you of good relations with the CIA and the FBI," he said.

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Follow-Up  
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¶21. (U) Rumaihi promised to work with the Embassy on follow-up until the next GSD meeting.

¶22. (U) This cable has been cleared by the Gulf Security Dialogue delegation.  
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